

REMARKS

The foregoing amendments to the Claims and these remarks are responsive to the Office Action mailed September 22, 2004 (hereinafter "the Office Action").

The Examiner objected to the drawings, asserting that Figures 9 and 8 should be re-labeled as 8 and 9, respectively, in order to concur with the specification. Accordingly, Applicant submits herewith amended replacement drawing sheets in accord with the Examiner's request.

Claims 1-5, 7, 13, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Le Blanc, Jr. (U.S. 3,383,722). Specifically, the Examiner asserted that:

Le Blanc, Jr. Discloses a life preserver assembly comprising a substantially planar main body portion (figure 3) formed from a buoyant material and separation means 47, 50, 51, 55, defining in said main body portion at least one life preserver, and permitting said life preserver to be removed from said main body portion. Figure 3 also shows more than one life preserver in the main body portion.

In response, Applicant has cancelled claims 1-5, 7, 13 and 14 in this Amendment, without prejudice as to Applicant's ability to argue the patentability of these claims in a continuation application.

Claims 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Le Blanc, Jr. (U.S. 3,383,722). Specifically, the Examiner asserted that:

Le blanc, Jr. teaches that the segments in the main body portion are cut. To merely pre-cut the segments leaving a score frangible portion would have been an obvious method of cutting the selected portions to one having ordinary skill in the art.

In response, Applicant has cancelled claims 9 and 10 in this Amendment, without prejudice as to Applicant's ability to argue the patentability of these claims in a continuation application.

Claims 6, 8, 11, and 12 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In response, Applicant has rewritten claims 6, 8, 11, and 12 in independent form, including all limitations of the base and intervening claims.

Applicant submits that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of Applicant's claims is respectfully requested. Applicant invites the Examiner to call the undersigned if it is believed that a telephonic interview would expedite the prosecution of the application to an allowance.

The Commissioner for Patents is authorized to charge the fees for two independent claims in excess of three and a one month extension of time, as well as any deficiency in the payment of fees due with the filing of this paper, to Deposit Account No. 50-0951.

Respectfully submitted,

AKERMAN SENTERFITT

Date:

1/24/05

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